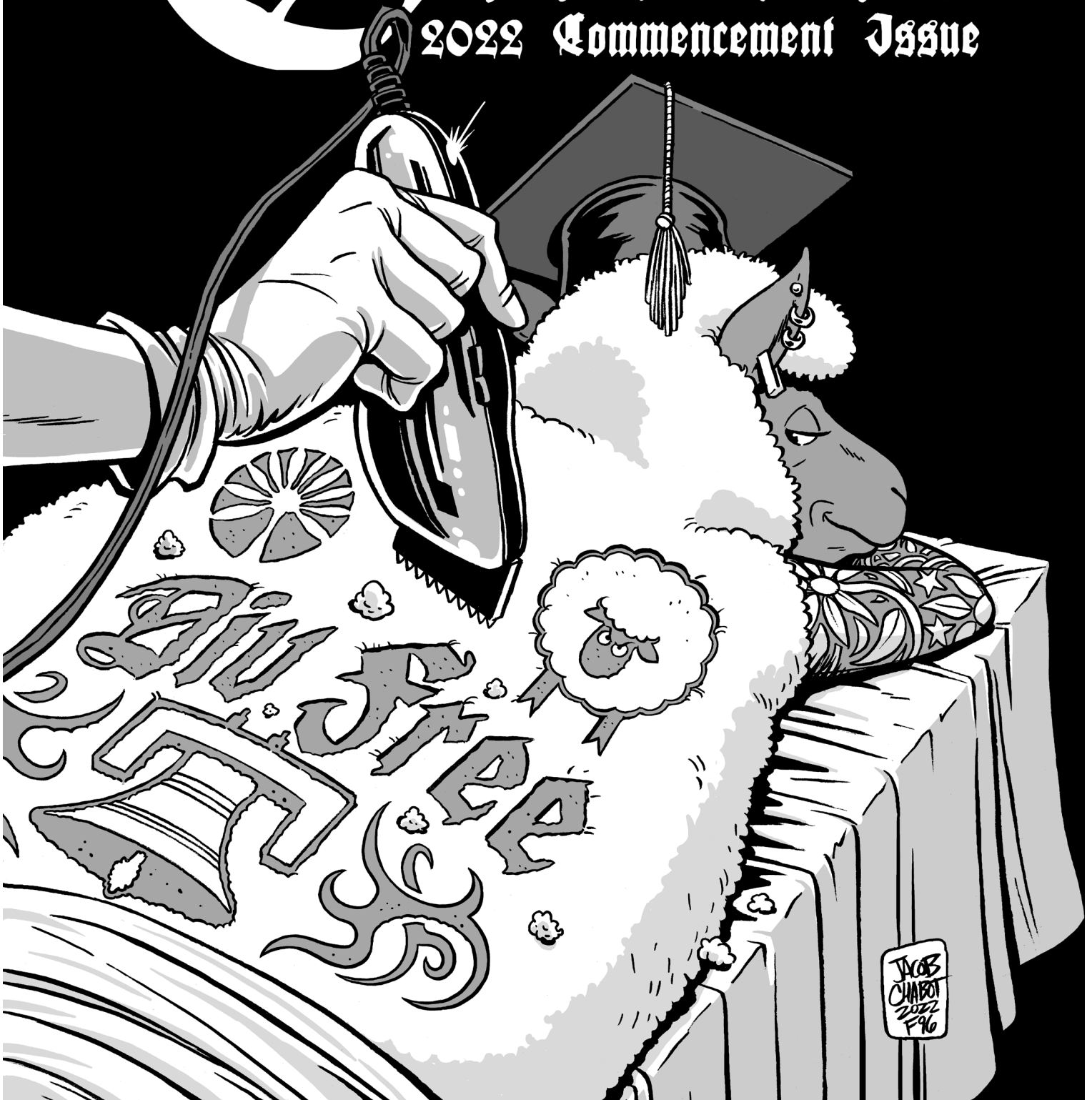


The

omen

2022 Commencement Issue



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Staff Box: (In order of appearance)

Leo: Blorbibi
Jay: Bonky
Sam: Bingus
Nicholas: Bungus
Ida: Angy

Front Cover: Jacob Chabot F96

Back Cover: Jim Patten

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in any format (no PDFs please) by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu, the Omen Office, Leo's mailbox (1593), or Jay's mailbox (0370).

Policy

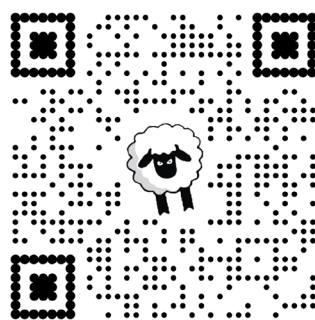
The Omen is an every-other-week-ly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Friday nights in the basement of Merrill in the company of a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen every other Monday in Saga, the post office, online at <http://expelallo.men>, and just about any other place we can find to put it.

Find all issues here!

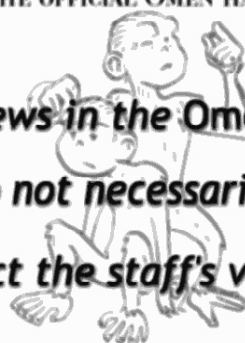


THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIKU:

Views in the Omen (5)

Do not necessarily (7)

Reflect the staff's views (5)



EDITORIAL

SMELL YA LATER,

by Leo Zhang and Jay Poggi



Thanks to all the alums, current students, and Jims who submitted! 🐑

SECTION SPEAK

Letter from Shel Rosen F12

Congratulations all you many graduates!! If you started at Hampshire the Fall immediately after I graduated, then your commencement was the first to be cancelled due to COVID-19. I feel ya'! My commencement for graduate school was also cancelled due to COVID-19 and my celebration had to happen over Animal Crossing: New Leaf.

I really don't know any of you and I have no idea what it must have been like to go to Hampshire since the pandemic started. I imagine it was even more stressful and isolating than usual, which is really saying something.

Now, you get to leave Hampshire, and move on with your life. So here's my top 5 pieces of advice for moving on from Hampshire.

1. You can't keep all of your college friends. You're going to drift away from probably 90% of all of your friends from Hampshire and that's just going to be OK. You will make new friends who fit better into the new shape your life takes. The sooner you can accept that you can't maintain the exact same main friend groups forever, the sooner you can move onto being open to making those new friends and having healthier relationships with the college friends you do stay close to.

2. Give yourself and everyone you know amnesty for the shit you/they did in college. You're going to start realizing that your brain was under-developed and nobody was sober nearly often enough whether from substances or all-nighters studying or contact high from the insane social environment. Especially if you stick around Western Mass for a bit, you seriously need to let go of old beef about people being bad modmates during Div II or who slept with whose ex or who had a bad opinion in class or on Facebook during Div Whenever. Everyone gets amnesty. Approach Hampshire alumni you re-meet in the outside world as if they are a new person and you don't know whatever nonsense they did in college. Forgive yourself for however you were while at Hampshire and remind yourself that it was a learning experience and that was the point.

3. Let go of all the weird axioms and rules you lived for having Correct Opinion Battles. Once you start talking to people who mostly didn't go to Hampshire, you'll need to understand that not everything is a battle to stay on the unproblematic checklist and none of them know all the very special social rules and axioms that exist in Hampshire Culture. Sometimes, your tone does matter. Sometimes, intent is important. Sometimes, people who are marginalized have bad takes too (we are all human, actually, and not mystic seers). It's really good that you have learned more than the average person when it comes to critiques of higher social systems and critical thinking and challenging authority etc. etc. and you really can put that to very good use in the outside world. Just remember that not everyone else got that, and you shouldn't hold it against them when they aren't on your level. Your ability to stay calm,

approachable, inviting, and non-combative will pay dividends and you don't have to give up any of your beliefs or values to develop that skill.

4. There's like a 50% change you are going to go to grad school, given that you're a Hampshire Student. What you should know is that student debt you take on for grad school is very real and will very much limit your freedom post-grad school so don't go doubling your student debt like I did. Take out reasonable loan amounts you can afford to pay off in your life time. You should also know that grad school is like 10x easier than Hampshire other than having to work more hours of job during it. Like holy shit, grad school was a cinch compared to Hampshire it was far far less challenging. But also I was working full-time so it was quite the juggle and it did kill my social life.

5. It's 100% valid to keep living in Western Mass after graduating. There's nothing shameful or wrong about it. It doesn't make you a failure or a non-starter. It's a beautiful, wonderful area and if you do choose to move away you will likely miss a lot about it for a very long time. It's also 100% valid to move away to a city or a suburb or a rural area or anywhere really. Moving away might help you grow as a person or develop your career, which is great! But you're also not a failure if big city-living exhausts you and you decide you'd rather live somewhere quieter. If you do stay, try not to cling to your old college haunts and alumni community; making new friends and going to new places is still possible and important. If you do leave, make sure you're not just moving to some random big city where you don't know anyone or have a job lined up just because you don't want to feel like a non-starter. Choose the right place to move to for the right reasons: career, community, environment, culture, etc.

Bonus: Over time you are going to realize that you have a Private Liberal Arts Education and, as weird as Hampshire is, it's still societally not perceived as much different from having gone to Amherst or Oberlin. It's a big privilege and you should be grateful for it. Hampshire really does give one of the best educations in the world (if you designed your concentration well) and nowhere else will ever be the same, for better and for worse. Be prepared for life to get way less stressful and far more boring. You did it!!!

Mazel tov to all the graduates who managed to finish their Div IIIs despite the world ending around them. You have done something incredibly impressive worth being proud of for the rest of your lives. Transitioning to a post-college life will always be weird and stressful but once you get your footing things will stabilize and when you're nearly 30 you will look back on this time with... probably confusion? honestly? Mostly confusion. College stories from Hampshire alumni outperform everyone else consistently. Hampshire is truly a weird place.

Here's to hoping Hampshire will live long enough to see many more graduating classes, although unfortunately I can't help with that right now due to my aforementioned extremely excessive student debt.

Enjoy those bagpipes!

- Shelley Rosen, F12, and real professional Librarian who still has "Archivist for the Omen" on her real professional resume. 

Alumni Haikus

Submitted by Richard Rushfield F86

So was conferring with some fellow alumni I'm on a text chain with and we all started writing haikus about our Hampshire experience. So here for you are a series of alumni haikus, do with as you will.

First up, My series of haikus about the five houses:

Dakin
Here is where it starts
Halls. halls without end – and yet
Cage upon the roof.

Merrill
To Merrill I go
Wherefore my love must die. Far
From God, close to SAGA

Prescott
Tin Walls, iron steps
Tavern gone, no hope but dreams,
No dreams but our tears.

Enfield
Mods dark. No sound but
Music from the Red Barn. Do
They know it's Tuesday?

Grenwich
This is where the world
ends. Round like a diploma
This donut has no
hole.

From Beth Carey:

trees, donuts, no sleep
driftwood on coffee and speed
me and my bolex

34 years on
i can't deal with corporate life
i'm still unprepared

From John Mitchell (F 82 I think)

First year drank it all
Didn't think how incorrect
If he puked on her

Nirvana on stage
Sonic Youth played once here too
Not quite Supreme Dicks.

It's still Halloween.
Dirty hippies are tripping.
Jesus reads Plato.

Jaeger Meister. Wow
This is not like other schools -
All Hippies and punks.

The coed bathroom
Smells like broccoli ferment,
Pot smoke, and quaaludes.

From Andrea Newhouse, 83 Maybe?

Dakin
First night window gaze
Can't decide to join or not
Left inside alone

Merrill
Double rooms for one
You've reached the end of time here
High society



From Justice Erikson F13

Congratulations to Wm. Josiah Erikson (F97?) on his commencement!

He managed to finish his Div III after over 20 years while playing an instrumental role in keeping Hampshire alive and surviving the pandemic, which is pretty fucking awesome. I'm proud of you, Papa!
- Justice Erikson, F13 alumn

P.S.
I wanted to write the legendary saga of the Eriksons at Hampshire but ran out of time. Maybe we can write it together someday. ♥ My version was going to be hilariously unfactual.

Pictured, the author and their father, on the occasion of Justice's commencement in 2017.



I have 5 cats

By Aaron Buchsbaum F01



I love you all, and love Hampshire and am so proud of you all for making it through a really tough time. You all deserve all the accolades and are going to do great things outside the bubble.

By Nora Nalle F08 

Hi Hampsters! - wishing you all the best. The future is always bright. Choose to make the best out of every moment.
No joke--life is short!

By Jose Fuentes F05 

THUS SPAKE A FELLA

By Wilder Konschak F98

First things first, I think we should start using “fella” (like, hey fellas!) in a non-binary fashion, intended to mean “fellow human.” Or better, “fellow future corpse.”

That being said.

There’s always an old fella sitting next to the bottomless pit. You’re bending at the knees, puffing in and out, ready to jump on in and catch some fucking answers, and then some old fella starts telling you: you won’t find any answers there.

It seems that I’m that old fella now.

Why do we wait by the hole? Why do we keep reminding young jumpers that no one’s ever surfaced with answers? Well, it’s not to discourage you from jumping, that’s for sure. Like Morpheus watching while Neo showed off his moves, we wait by the hole because we can’t help hoping that someday, somebody is gonna jump in there and come out with some fucking answers. We’re all rooting for you, kid.

But we also want you to know, on the off-chance that you’re not the eternally-anticipated human messiah, that it’s perfectly okay. We love you for trying. You ought to love yourself for trying. But please don’t be angry and depressed when you climb out having learned only that you’re just like the rest of us. Cosmic ambitions, mortal remains. No answers.

And then it’ll be your turn on to sit on the side of the hole, warning the youngsters who come running up like a goat tied to a rail from a train track (look up the joke, it’s a good one), warning them: there’s nothing in that hole that you didn’t take in with you!

So, jump in believing you’re The One. And crawl out knowing you’re Another One. That’s the only rollercoaster this armband lets anybody ride.

I had some babies a few years back. And let me tell you, they’re fucking nuts. Really sensitive little buggers. The smaller one screams almost as much as my Boomer Dad. But I sympathize. This ride is intense at its dullest, hurled into everything without hardly any context or direction. To awaken, slingshot into the clear air, arcing through a million colors and sounds and sensations, only to crash back to silent stillness with not a single instant to process. Day after day. Life after life. We fall through time in one direction, one dimension, drifting and bumping and spinning, faster and faster, dancing with other droplets before subliming into mist. And there’s just never a fucking second to think, never an unfalling thing to hang onto.

Fellow babies, we are born to grasp, it’s an instinct. That’s the one thing we’re given, an urge to close our fists and hold on. It’s what all life does, we grab what touches us, tries to make something out of it, try to make ourselves out of it, like flowers grab sunshine, like my dog grabs my donut. It takes a lifetime of learning to let elegantly go of anything at all.

If we're lucky, that's what our time in the dark hole teaches us. How to let go of being The One.

It's been twenty years since my snowy/rainy commencement day. It was starting to dawn on me then, the nightmarish idea that I might not be The One. After that came years of arguing and voting, planning and making, trying to save The World, trying to hold onto the present moment. And now I'm the old fella sitting on the side of the bottomless pit, feet cooling in a kiddie pool.

After all that sound and fury, the best advice I can give is so quaint, so familiar, its meaning is invisible in written form, worn out like an exclamation point in an upbeat office email. It's this: today may be the last good day.

As bad as today may be, today could be the last good day. It's the GOOD part that matters. There will be more days! This isn't the end! You're not getting out that easy! But it's probably the last good one. And you can't fix it, you're not The One. And you can't stop it from slipping through your fingers, you're not The One. All you can do is bend the nightmare. Find a way to enjoy the rough ride. Because tomorrow, the seas boil, the air burns, and the sun swallows the earth.

So when you sit with your loved ones, remember, this is the last good day, and it IS a good day, even with all its pain and injustice, so don't spend it angry over stubbed toes. Don't spend it furious that you couldn't fix the world, or stop the falling, or hold onto anything. Don't spend it cursing empty holes that we fucking TOLD YOU were empty, fella. 🤖

Reflections from a Dropout, 20 years later

By Dorian Gittleman Foo

I dropped out of Hampshire after my second year. Or rather, my parents very sensibly declared - we're not giving you another dime - and I headed home to Louisville in disgrace.

What followed was no more or less complicated than you'd expect 20 years to be. I flunked out of another school and got fired a few times before eventually not flunking out of state school and then an MPH. I went on to leave jobs by personal choice after giving notice and for other jobs. (As opposed to one memorable day in 2004 where I told my boss I'd left my sweater in my car and just never came back.) Through my 20s I dated terrible men, including one who made me so angry I threw a flip flop at him in the rain. Not a pina colada in sight.

So where is Hampshire in all this? It was a mere 2 years and my memory of them is faded and fuzzy. There was too much Fiona Apple, I know that much. In all honesty, my feelings about Hampshire are mixed at best.

But Hampshire folk! They have stuck hard to me, harder than I can possibly explain. First and foremost is my partner of 10 years, sitting beside me while I write. There are the Hampshire folks on Twitter, who have kept me company through a long pandemic, sharing equal parts despair and cat pictures. There is a new work friend I made just this year. Friends I promise this will happen to you. At some point you'll come to a new place and meet someone you know you've never met, but they'll be so familiar. And they'll start talking about how they went to this tiny liberal arts college in Mass, and oh the pleasure that will spread through you! If you were alone, as I was on my arrival in New Orleans, no longer!

So that is my first bit of advice - keep up your Hampshire friends. But! You should know that the friends you keep may not be the ones you expect. At Hampshire I planned to write novels. Now I manage

federal COVID funding. I feel so much pride in my friends who stayed in the arts, but I've little to say to them. But others I knew less well went into activism or academia, and we grew closer. Go with it.

Second bit of advice for the folks like me and I cannot hold in - try not to worry too much about fucking up if you can help it. Try to have fun while you're doing it. Have as much fun as you can and don't feel guilty.

Third - Saying it again. Have as much fun as you can and don't feel guilty. As I get older, my life has more meaning, and I like myself more, and I can say any number of positive self-affirming things, BUT. I have a harder time with easy pleasure and fun. So go nuts! Also hydrate.

Fourth - Keep wearing a mask indoors. Just expect to do this the rest of your life and don't give it another thought.

Fifth - When you're feeling charitable, share what's cool with fogeys like myself who work too hard and go to bed early, but would actually like to move past the New Pornographers.

Sixth - burn it all down. But as Dalton would say, be nice. 🙄

Mourning flower(Poem)

By Sean Song

It is hard to describe the smell of such flowers.
Their smell is kinda nauseous, giving me a
headache if I am around them.
But yet the smell is sweet and gentle.
They linger in the air and with every breath I take,
a sickly sweet smell lingers in my nose.
It is hard to sit in one place with them all the time.

Is it the smell that causes me to run away from the
place
Or is it the name that drives me mad?
I guess it is instinctual.
The dead are scary.

It is the fate of all things that were born here.
In a funny sense, the world is a prison for humans
to live and die.
Maybe my kids will go into space and my brain will
be in a jar going with them.
But death will come and hunt for all, huh.

A friend is holding an art exhibit as their final Div
III project
A friend who was plagued by the death of a friend
and father made
A friend who showed some of their works to me
A friend who tied me down to the earth with a
promise.

But I went to their exhibit.
It seemed like a make-shift exhibit.
No white voids to exemplify the art or lighting to
show their luster
Warm yellow lighting and the lighting outside
conflict with each other
And the vase with flowers with two pictures on the
table
the centerpiece to contrast the emptiness of the
room

It isn't stuffy like any other art gallery.
It isn't something to be showcased or paraded like
a prize
It isn't something to be glorified or honor
It is homely for all its worth

It is the celebration of the memories
A celebration that is primal to the human psyche
A loss of two people
A father and a friend

A hope that their memory will not fade in the
artist's mind.
A hope that others can empathize with their pain
A hope that their poems, art, and flowers can reach
them
A hope that I still held onto

For I am a ghost in this world.
A soul held down by promises.
A soul held down by the past mistakes and regrets
A soul wishing to kill myself and end my eternal
suffering

And yet, I do not
I am held down by a promise of a friends
I am held down by the love of my family
I am held down for promises of the future
I am held down by the thought that I have too
much to lose

Yet the smell of mourning flowers gives pause to
my painful thoughts.
The half-finished painting sparks my wonder
about what could it look like if they are complete.
The Poems well up tears in my very soul
The thoughts and hardships of old memories with
my friend flood back into my mind
And yet, I couldn't cry

I should cry but my mind is somewhere else.
What would friendship become after they leave?

Would they grow to despise me?
It is hard to say as the smell of mourning flowers
fogs my mind

I can't help but smile while paranoia grips my
heart.
I can't help but to not say something that they may
ponder on for eternity
I can't help but wish my time in the gallery was
longer
It was inevitable that the end of my visit draws
near and I can only think reminiscence it like a
dream

As I said my good byes to my friend and step
outside with umbrella with hand.
Partly cloudy skys are ahead.
I can only smile on my friends bright future
I can only wish our paths will cross again.
I can only wish these worries will be a faint memory
over time
A wish that will be inevitable
For time heals all wounds. 🐼

Letter From Grace Willey F12

To the readers of my dearest Omen,

What a wonder it is to write to you in this our year a deity twenty twenty two. I am a long way from Camp Hamp in all of its absurdity but then I am no longer an absurd little twenty something navigating academia with wildly unchecked attention deficits and no social skills.

These days I'm living in my California hometown, teaching preschool at the elementary school I went to. I studied studio arts and picture books and literacy and childhood studies so in hindsight it's all coming together. My favorite part is that Hamp never forced me to take math and now the most math I need to know (at least to be a genius in the eyes of my students) is to know how many fingers I have on my hand.

In some ways I miss the Omen. I miss the camaraderie of being in the musty mildewy Merrill basement. I miss late night Sibie's pizza and climbing over that little wall into the server room. I miss the staff box answers on the white board and the endless streams of Elvidillos (thanks JGardz) that we'd print because no one took us seriously, but it look's like things are maybe shifting and the establishment is finally giving the oldest continuous publication on campus its due (at least that's what I garner from twitter).

But: I don't miss the late nights. I don't miss the scrounging of quarters to buy a dark chocolate bar and peach Tazo ice tea from the vending machine because in skipping one class to do another class' homework I forgot to stock up on caffeine from the Hampstore (children, oh children, learn from my mistakes). I don't miss the feeling of helplessness and isolation the depths of a New England February- a bitterness and loneliness so foreign to my West Coast soul that I always call my time at Hampshire "My time abroad".

But sometimes I dream about looking out over the cornfields all covered in snow. The crunch of the salt beneath your shoes, walking up the steps in Cole. Coming back to the dorms from the Dakin Living Room, where you microwaved a tamale mom sent you, being greeted by the weed thick scent of the halls, and discovering your tamale froze again by the time you're back in your room. I miss the weirdos at Hamp, people who might be called "Cringe" by outsiders, but by god were they my people. The unicyclists, the ukulele freaks, the kids with greasy dyed hair who never bathed but somehow got more head than you ever would- gracious, you are beautiful.

So here are my tips for the west coaster student reading this:

-Take your Vitamin D supplements

-Don't skip meals if that is something you need, I know the sky is always flat grey and the trees are like sad twigs but meals help you keep track of time

-Get your attention deficits assessed even if it's the 'trend' to do that now. You might actually have something and you could avoid all those delirious all-nighters and avoid feelings of nausea and dread and intense feelings of worthlessness for turning in half baked work if you get the right help.

-Remember that spring is so beautiful when it comes and that winter can be beautiful too. I still don't know how winter can be beautiful but I must say something uplifting to get you through it.

-It may block your bowels, but a free pizza is a good pizza.

Okay that's it. I'm done. Here. Have an Elvidillo for the road.

Sincerely,
Grace Willey F12
Former Co-Editrix of The Omen



OH SHIT REMEMBER WHEN 'OVER THE GARDEN WALL' CAME OUT IN INCREMENTS THE WEEK AFTER HALLOWEEN AND THE OUTSIDE WORLD WAS REFLECTING THE SAME CHANGING LANDSCAPE THAT WAS IN THE SHOW THAT WAS SO COOL



Middle-Effort Article

By Aaron Buchsbaum FO1

Advice is like pizza: cheesy, crusty, and the toppings require middling consensus and fair division of slices among the group that is ordering the pizza or else someone is disappointed: Home Alone

The Omen has almost died many times. The throughline is a small group of committed people, almost ruthless in that commitment but then I'm sure they have at least some ruth. You cannot ring the bell at Hampshire without ruth.

If there is a student newspaper now at Hampshire, it still isn't as interesting as The Omen. Yet one question on my mind is how the Omen, irreverent and saucy, manages to "meet the moment" of microaggressions, #metoo, radical inclusion, and so on. The publication--and its writers--in my day was (were?) consistently rowdy and offensiveness was inherent to many issues. So too were subtle jokes, softcore porn, real dialogue™, and comics with great philosophical depth. I can only conclude The Omen has always been a right-enough mix for the community in which it spawned.

Speaking of, has the Omen been taking to Community Council since 2005? Email me at aarontastic@gmail.com and let me know.

Why am I writing this article, you don't ask? Well. I received a message from Ida, who I do not know other than as a hurricane, and still don't, but now have some respect for. Ida showed good persuasive skill, combining local culture (that is, Omen vocabulary and lore), assertiveness, a specific time-bound request, and empathy. Ida: please tuck that model in your back pocket. It's valid "in teh reel world". But lacking any one of those four elements does, "in my experience", make it not so. Also, if you need to get to the issue to 16 pages, remember you can publish that email as an article.

If there's one lesson that The Omen taught me, it's that creative use of a scanner gets you cover art very quickly. But expediency, however inspired, can never replace Hello Kitty dildo art made by live talent.

What else? Well, I'm married. And my wife has taught me a lot, for which I'm grateful. Mostly she's taught me about individuality, not by sitting me down for Family Meeting and discussing Foucault's thinking on it, but by the outward expression of her own introspection.

For a few years in our relationship this didn't matter as much. But eventually she wanted to sort out boundaries of me, her, the relationship, and a bunch of other things. It was really not a fun process. But I wanted to do it because I love her and trust her, and at present we've made good headway. So, marry for love and trust, seems like a good bit of wisdom to pass on. I'll also add, marry someone (or enter into an analogous long-term human commitment, if that's your thing) who seems o.k. at growing and making adjustments.

I read a post recently on Facebook—is that still used by college humans?—that blithely said most couples counselors will agree that the man is the issue. Do you think that's true? It was really disheartening to scroll past. I'd like to encourage anyone reading this, to avoid public statements blaming entire groups of people for things. It feels good and makes sense sometimes. But regarding the impact, I'm skeptical it provides useful meaning once it hits diverse eyeballs. So, write in on paper in your journal.

As we can see, I've taken a path of 'providing advice to new graduates' here. I think that's fair: I'm 39 and would like to make things at least one quantum easier for you, by describing certain traps. But I was never editor of The Omen so it's probably all crap. Oh wait: "Don't be editor of The Omen. It's terrible on a resume." And this gem from more recent experience: "don't let gardening groups pressure you into only planting native species."

Here's a final thing: solving moral issues through politics is insane but necessary. So, bringing some crazy to the table is what we do. But also look at what Ida did, and use your empathy and knowledge of local culture.

Be like Ida: when you yell at people, try to give (the vast majority of) them an out. 

Untitled

By Gabe McKee F97

In 1925, Mrs. Alice May Williams of Auckland, New Zealand sent a letter to the astronomers at Mount Wilson observatory concerning cosmological information, the true orbits of the planets, their climates, and their connections to the spiritual world. “If I die,” she wrote, “my knowledge may die with me, & no one may ever have the same knowledge again.”¹

When schizophrenic science fiction author Richard S. Shaver launched his brief career writing for *Amazing Stories* in the 1940s, the first letter he sent to editor Ray Palmer, containing information communicated to him via rays beamed into his mind by subterranean mutants he called dero, stated his wish that Palmer would publish it “to keep it from dying with me.”

Songwriter and artist Danile Johnston, whose creative projects were intertwined with his mental illness, said in an interview two years before his death, songwriter and artist Daniel Johnston: “I can’t stop writing. If I did stop, there could be nothing. Maybe everything would stop. So I won’t stop. I’ve got to keep it going.”


In his book *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane*, art historian and psychotherapist John M. MacGregor writes of the purpose of image-creation in psychosis:

Having abandoned the strenuous attempt to reconcile himself to the demands and sacrifices of day-to-day existence in the world, the psychotic withdraws into the utter isolation of the self. Within that altered state of consciousness, for reasons that we understand no better than we understand any creativity, the psychotic begins to form images that, paradoxically, may be aimed, in part, at reestablishing contact with the outer world. The artist and the madman seem intent on building a bridge, each from his own standpoint, in the world or out of it, erecting a structure between the self and other, between the world and the mind, between the surface and the depth.

MacGregor is writing specifically of the art of the psychotic, but writing is just as much a bridge-building project as artistic creation. And this bridge cannot be one-sided: MacGregor further argues for the important role that the insane can play in our culture:

By insisting upon the isolation of the ‘mentally ill,’ as though insanity were a contagious disease, it appears that we have deprived society of an aspect of reality that it desperately needs. As Jean Debuffet has again and again pointed out, we need our insane brothers and sisters with us in our communities.... ‘The journey through madness,’ however extreme and frightening it may appear from outside, is necessary and of value not only to the individual, but to all of us.

The insane writer, the psychotic artist, explore this darkness and seek to communicate what they find there to the outside world, using this compulsion to communicate as a way to link their inner world with the world outside.

Anyway, it’s a good thing that Hampshire still has *The Omen*, keeping that ever-important bridge of communication open for an ever-growing list of crackpots and weirdos. Congratulations, graduates, and make sure that your knowledge doesn’t die with you. No one may ever have the same knowledge again. 

¹ This last phrase became the title of an exhibition of eccentric letters sent to Mount Wilson held at the Museum of Jurassic Technology in Los Angeles.

The Phantom Zolebooth Part II: Return to the Kingdom of Wisdom

By Michael Zole F99



M. Zole
@ztr



Replying to @HampshireOmen

I think everyone involved with the Omen would be some combination of worshipper, clergy, Pope, saint, god, and heretic, and the mix changes over time.

11:28 PM · Aug 19, 2021



On December 28, 2019, some two decades after I matriculated at Hampshire and mere weeks before things went globally to shit, I returned to the Pioneer Valley.

It was the first time I'd been back since I moved to Seattle in 2008, and I was almost shocked at how little had changed. The boot store in Northampton with the funny sign? Still there! The Hampshire campus? Slightly reconfigured (as if to address some points I once made in the Omen, I might add), but essentially the same. When I sat down with my breakfast at the Haymarket, I overheard a high school English teacher saying that she tries to keep her curriculum light on "DWGs — that's what I call dead white guys". It was as if that conversation had started before my time there, and would continue long after I became a DWG myself. It warmed my winter-coldened heart. I also went to the Eric Carle museum.

While I was a student I wrote for every issue of the Omen, and I got pretty invested. But by the time I graduated, layout sessions and the issues themselves had gotten a bit lonely, and it seemed the writing was on the wall (in chalk, instead of a god-damned InDesign file like it should be). I chose to disconnect when I graduated, so I could save myself the heartache and instead focus on my new goal of living in every shitty apartment in Boston.¹

Imagine my surprise, then, when I got an invite to the Omen's 15th anniversary celebration in 2008. You probably don't have to imagine it, actually. It was like: "huh!" The Omen had moved from the tiny, dingy, semi-forgotten "pub lab" in the Dakin basement² to a spacious office. The crew was scrappy but sharp and dedicated.

Imagine my further surprise, or maybe estimate it relative to the previous surprise, when editor Ida Kao pulled together a massive online Omen reunion in 2021. My tenure was now closer to the paper's founding than its present — and don't get me wrong: I already felt old as hell — the surprise was that, again, nothing much had changed. The poor bastards who came after me seemed just as smart, embittered, and prolific as any of my former colleagues, and they were also younger somehow. The only

1 Mission accomplished.

2 At one point we couldn't track down the key and discovered that you could easily kick open the door.

real smirch on the paper today is the proliferation of Memes,³ but that's a global problem, I suppose. Of course, as the Omen hasn't changed, it seems like the student body it serves hasn't either, and this is where I'd like to gently segue into telling you that you're all a bunch of twerps. Not that you aren't allowed and even expected to be a twerp between ages 13 and 28 or so, but Hampshire kids can take it a bit too far. Our alumni have gone on to do great things, from voicing a character on the hit show *Bob's Burgers*, to starting their own comedy festival, to releasing a spoken word album on 7 LPs and a bathrobe. That doesn't change the fact that *most* of the students on campus have a thoroughly unearned sense of confidence and self-importance.⁴

Whenever I try to explain my Hampshire experience to someone — well, if I'm in the Pacific Northwest I might just say it's like Evergreen. But failing that, I usually say it's a campus full of students who were each the smartest kid in their kindergarten class, and thus have felt like a singular, special being ever since. Putting a thousand of those people (give or take) on the same pig farm will inevitably challenge that feeling.

Being a part of that group can be an amazing experience, like you're zooming around the world on a magic flying Vespa that runs on firing synapses, but it also means that everyone is tripping over each other to prove that they're not just exceptional but in fact the *most* exceptional.⁵ I love a social justice warrior, for example, but when a Hampshire student wants to grind that axe, it often feels like they just learned about injustice that day and figured they'd have to be the one to fix it, possibly also *that day*.

This also means that nobody at Hampshire really wants to collaborate, or put any effort into someone else's thing when they could be working on their own unique⁶ vision. Everyone thinks they're John or Paul, so nobody wants to be Ringo, even temporarily. Have you heard "Here Comes The Sun" without drums? It totally falls apart at the bridge. You *need a Ringo*.

I was no exception. I was in the Gifted & Talented program at my elementary school, which was supposed to get us to challenge ourselves, but when you take a kid out of the boring normal class twice a week to play with the school's only Apple IIe, the special treatment is not lost on them. It totally backfired: if I felt like I was good at something, I took it to mean I'd never have to put in real effort, and if I wasn't good at something right away, I'd find a way to rationalize it as "not my thing".⁷

That belief in my inherent capability was informed my Div III, which was ostensibly a video game, but I hubristically decided to make a reusable "engine" first — a good way to avoid learning game design, which would've meant feeling incapable for a while — and ended up with not much engine and almost no game. Two of my good friends also made games for their Div IIIs, and it wasn't until we rang the bell that I realized we probably should've been working on the *same* game. My committee still passed me, because secretly everyone's Div III is a lesson in their own hubris. Well played, Hamp.

The only contexts where I remember Hampshire people collaborating regularly, setting aside Unreal Tournament's Capture the Flag mode, were things like film/video projects, theater (theatre?), and: the Omen. You definitely need help to make all but the most experimental film, so maybe that one's

3 OK, I may be old, but about this I'm right: the only novel aspect of so-called Memes — which are just images with text on them — is the implicit permission they give us to put zero effort into our bids for public attention.

4 And I love you anyway, but again: I'm right.

5 I remember people would laugh way too loud at the weekly Simpsons screenings in the Dakin house, as if to prove to everyone that they got the joke.

6 In all likelihood, not actually unique.

7 If this sounds like you, I recommend reading *Mindset* by Carol Dweck. In retrospect, the stuff that I was "naturally good at" was probably whatever I enjoyed enough that I didn't realize I was working at it.

by necessity, but the Omen is a bit of a special case. It's nobody's baby⁸, and the open submission policy is so foundational that even the most despotic editor can't take full ownership.

As a result, the Omen is a refreshingly "hey gang, let's put on a show"⁹ effort, with an interesting give and take. Everyone contributes their writing (or Memes, sigh), but what they look for in return is surprisingly diverse. I wanted the challenge and reward of building a body of work with my name on it, as ridiculous as the work turned out to be. Some people want to express an occasional opinion, or to leave their mark on the school in some way, or to excoriate the paper and its staff, and those are all fantastic motivations. Honestly, my hat is off to that last group, because I've learned that most people who want to talk shit will do it in private or anonymously, as if they're afraid to stand by it for some reason.

I gather that the Omen gets as much of that questionable hate as ever, but current students, I come to you from across time (20 years) and space (3,000 miles) to say that the Omen is Good, Actually. Your time at Hampshire will be short, even if you do manage to graduate. You were not the first,¹⁰ and you will not be the last. Maybe you'll change the college or the world with your brilliant ideas, but you damn sure won't if you expect everyone to line up behind you just because you could read better than the other kids when you were 6.

I feel like the stuff I was supposed to learn in college has only recently sunk in; for years afterward I still felt like the goal of life was to do something so amazing that you are suddenly valid in everyone's eyes forever after. Sure, it sounds dumb when I say it like that, but that's exactly what you're aiming for if you think you're just one great screenplay / album / novel / tax policy / art installation / OnlyFans away from that mountaintop. Of course you're going to blow up at every rando who countermands your values; you're trying to save the whole goddamned world by yourself and this fucker is *ruining it for everybody*.

My brief visit to the Valley was unfortunately bookended by some unfortunate surprises in the form of the death of a dear friend and the end of a promising new relationship.¹¹ Life will kick your ass like that sometimes. You'll be better off, I think, if you choose preemptively to adopt some humility before humility is thrust upon you. If you want a metaphorical slice of pizza from the Omen layout sessions of the world, godspeed; but offer to do some proofreading first.¹² 🙇

8 Much respect to founder Stephanie Cole, who nonetheless probably has better things to do at this point.

9 This is apparently a paraphrase from the Judy Garland and Mickey Rooney film *Babes in Arms*.

10 Unless Ken Burns is reading this. Hi, Ken! You were actually the first.

11 And then a plague.

12 I don't actually know if the Omen still orders pizza for layout meetings. Honestly, in my heart, Sibie's is still Cantone's.

How an old photo in the Omen office lead me to garbage bags of free donuts and glory

By Molly McLeod Fo5

The year was 2006 or so, and I was in the Omen office, bored, probably waiting for people to finish their shit so I could finish my shit. Is the Omen office still a dingy fluorescent-lit unkempt closet in the basement of Merrill (or was it Dakin)? Yikes. There were some sad-looking old filing cabinets so I decided to see what that was about. Nothing that sexy, just some old papers with words on them, blah blah blah. UNTIL – a stack of old photographs fell into my lap.

The photos featured a group of friends from the late 90s hanging out at the reservoir – one person with bright orange spiky hair, M’issa, caught my eye. I took the photos and a few others, thinking I might make a collage with them.

Sometime later – maybe it was a few days, but let’s say it was the same day for the sake of a good story – I was at the Circus Folk Unite! playtime showing the photos to my friends. (Fun fact: I was one of the founding members of the circus collective). A few randos turned up to playtime and we were like, “who the heck are you?” And they were like “we’re some alums visiting the area and heard Hampshire has a circus now, we do circus things too!” And we were like “cool, teach us tricks.”

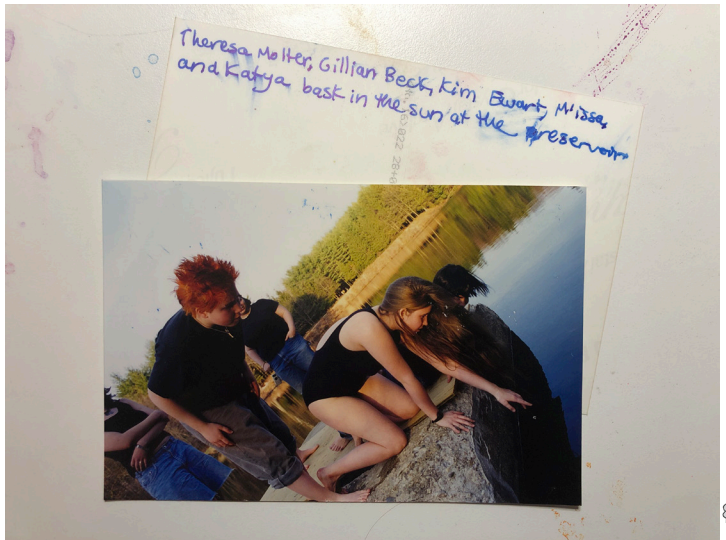
One of the randos saw the photos I had and was like, “hey, that’s me and my friends! I’m M’issa! How the hell do you have that photo!” And I was like, “no freaking way! I found these random photos from like 10 years ago of some alums a few hours ago, and then said alums just show up in my life?! WTF!! That’s fucking wild!” M’issa and their friend taught us some circus tricks, and as they were leaving they showed us several trash bags full of donuts they stashed outside the lounge. “We dumpster-dived these donuts, do you want them?” they said. “Do you even have to ASK?” we said.

Around midnight we took the bags of donuts and went around knocking on dorm doors, handing them out. We made some very high people very happy that night.

I just went looking for those Omen office photos, and after over 16 years, several cross country moves, and many purges of my stuff, I am absolutely shocked to report that I still have them!

Finally, some shameless self-promotion: I’m an independent artist, author, and creativity coach, check out my work at mollymcleod.com or on Instagram [@mollyampersand](https://www.instagram.com/mollyampersand). I don’t really understand TikTok yet because I’m an elder millennial, but I’m on there too [@mollyampersand](https://www.instagram.com/mollyampersand). Twitter is a hellscape too closely resembling the hellscape we actually live in and I’m not really on there anymore.

I know earnestness is not really in the Omen brand, but I wouldn’t be able to live the weird creative life doing all the weird creative things I love without my experience at Hampshire, and I’m grateful for it. I love supporting people as a coach to do all the weird creative things they love, so if you’re looking for support on your goals, how to make time for creative projects, or how to make a living doing what you love, book a free session with me! mollymcleod.com/coaching



What Google thinks: googleism results from October 8th 2006

By Molly McLeod F05

Found on my old hard drive while searching for old omen things

the omen is a classic look at the possibility of the apocalypse

the omen is on the us version in the original mono and a newly created stereo surround soundtrack that was made for the laserdisc remaster issue

the omen is really sunday tabloid christianity

the omen is easily transportable and can fit in the trunk of a small car

the omen is pretty pulpy stuff with absolutely no religious significance or biblical veracity whatsoever

the omen is een van de beste voorbeelden van een film die het maakte vooral dankzij de filmmuziek

the omen is a new type of marker

the omen is no longer bookies favourite to be dropped

the omen is in for a real treat

the omen is easily transportable and can fit in the trunk of a small car

the omen is totally absorbed with evil as a superior force

the omen is a gangsta/horrorcore juggalo rapper from new york

the omen is one of jerry goldsmith's approximately 21 masterpieces

the omen is reversed

hampshire college is committed to purchase products

hampshire college is a 3

hampshire college is a tale spoken in many voices; nowhere is this more apparent than in the original sources contained in the college archives

hampshire college is 1/4 mile on the left

hampshire college is known for its business program but it also offers a large and well known hotel

hampshire college is a student run organization dedicated to promoting understanding and creating awareness around issues of professional wrestling

hampshire college is leader in sex

hampshire college is full of hippies with trust funds

hampshire college is developing an aquaponic system that has tremendous potential to produce food and income for rural and urban populations

hampshire college is the perfect place for lunch

hampshire college is not yet available; it will be posted here when it is released 🐑

The Strike Is Not Over

By Juliana Saxe

I have wanted to write a final send off since the beginning of this year. This piece was originally going to be titled “Farewell from your FundCom Director”. Plans have changed. I have been debating on the tone and the length of this piece for many weeks in my head. At the beginning of this semester I wanted this to be a piece where I fondly remember my year and closing out my time at Hampshire.

At other points I wanted it to be righteously furious, to be a bitingly honest recount of the ways that I have been screwed over and hurt by the students, systems, staff members and administrators. To refuse to go quietly into the night, to never let anyone who hurt me forget it. But both those times have passed. I am not righteously angry anymore, and honestly I want to get quietly into the night. For every time I’ve proclaimed that I didn’t want to go quietly into the night, I never realized how much it would hurt. How painful it would be to hold onto everything that hurt me - how taxing it is to convince so many people not only what has happened to me and why they should care. For those very same people to turn around and ask me what they should do about it. To tell me that “they don’t want anyone to get hurt” and they “they can’t just pick sides” - how emptying it feels for someone to look at your tears and your pain and saying “but the people hurting you might get hurt”.

Part of me wants to make this last paragraph much longer, and I probably will muster up the energy to actually write up an article of anger and rage and fury. This will not be the article. As of writing this anger is tiring, and painful. Anger without an outlet and without hope burns only you. If anger cannot keep your house warm or harm your enemies it will burn you. I am certainly not as angry as I used to be. I want things to change, I want them to be better for me and for future students. I do not have hope this will happen, or that anyone will care once I leave. I will not get justice or compassion or care. I do not have much hope. I once stated that I was afraid of what would happen when I was no longer angry. I thought I was going to be hopeless and empty. And now I know. I certainly am those things - but mostly I am tired. I do not think that I will be okay at Hampshire. Many times through this last year it seemed like much too large an ask to be okay - to feel alright at least for a little while. My happy ending will not be the justice that I am owed. Systems to protect others or even any kind of care for the pain that I have been subjected to. My happy ending is I get to leave and never look back.

I want to be okay. 🐑

Poo Crew Season Finale

By Jess Jiménez

I want to submit something to The Omen to tell everyone that Juliana Saxe and Ida Kao are my role models. For a while I was frustrated that I couldn't think of how to produce something that would match just how important they are to them but then I realized I don't have to. I just need to make something that carries the sentiment, something that can be seen by them, anyone who reads this issue, and anyone who will.

Actually, it's really hard to write this even still. This has a lot of emotional gravity for me and there's so much I want to say but can't bring myself to because the reality that I won't be going to school with them anymore, that in writing about our experience I'm forced to accept the fact that it's history... I don't know, man. It's heavy. It's a lot. I just really love you guys. You've done so much more for me than anyone will ever know. I love you so much.

VIVA LA POO CREW



keibuho ais 02/07/2022

Ok, this is coming together. This is becoming kind of sad actually. It's like we're nearing the climax of the current season. For me it's season one though and I really like season one



@keibuho ais Ok, this is coming together. This is becoming kind of sad actually. It's like we're nearing the climax of the cur...

Galia 02/07/2022

Every season does need a finale



keibuho ais changed the channel name: **the poo crew** 02/07/2022



I Love My Dog 02/07/2022

The fucking what

Jess why



keibuho ais 02/07/2022

I'm laughing so loud rn



Galia changed the channel name: **the season finale** 02/07/2022




I Love My Dog 02/07/2022

Imfao



keibuho ais changed the channel name: **the poo crew: season finale** 02/11/2022

 1



keibuho ais 02/11/2022
 that's sadder


keibuho ais changed the channel name: **the season finale** 02/11/2022


I Love My Dog 02/11/2022
 Okay where the fuck did "poo crew" come from and why did it come back

 1


keibuho ais 02/11/2022
 wtf are these visceral reactions you have to the poo crew



keibuho ais 02/22/2022
 I had to explain to my unamused grandmother why I have a button that says "Poo Crew" on it. I could not bring myself to admit that I was the one who came up with it; nor could I bring myself to admit that I was the only one who found it funny. (edited)


 @keibuho ais I had to explain to my unamused grandmother why I have a button that says "Poo Crew" on it. I could not br...



I Love My Dog 02/22/2022
 Holy shit

Jess
 I am in Dakin Student Life trying to avoid being too loud bc I am laughing so hard


keibuho ais 02/22/2022
 Imfao I'm in my room doing the same



I Love My Dog 02/22/2022

redacted lol


keibuho ais 02/22/2022
 blah blah blah I'm practically a martyr after that so I'm not listening


 @keibuho ais I had to explain to my unamused grandmother why I have a button that says "Poo Crew" on it. I could not br...


Galia 02/22/2022
 You dug this can of worms now lie in it

 2



Remembering Hampshire's Smallest Alum

By Stephen Morton Fo4

Hi Hampshire.

It's been a little while. Congratulations to all those graduating today! Sorry you had to go to college during a pandemic though, that sucks.

A big thanks to Ida for pulling together this issue, and for not letting the Omen die, which at this point seems only slightly less improbable than the fact that Hampshire itself hasn't died yet. Good work, everyone.

This is the second-ever Commencement special issue of the Omen. I put together the first back in spring of 2010 when I was graduating. That issue was comprised entirely of submissions by graduating students, but times change and the call went out for submissions from alums for this one. I assume the idea being that we might have something useful to say, but, at twelve years remove, I have no words of wisdom for all of you who are about to venture into the Real World™. I can't imagine anything about my own experience would translate to yours or vice versa. The Omen has never been "useful" anyway.

While I'm here though, I do want to commit to the record that is the Omen, that there was a cat living in the Hampshire Woods back in 2009 / 2010. People on campus called her Virginia, and she was tall and skinny, with silver fur that hid a faint tabby pattern that you could see if the light caught her just right.

If I had given myself more time to write this, I'd give you the full story, but suffice it to say that my wife (Margaret, Fo7) and I took in Virginia. At the time she'd lost so much weight that we didn't realize she was the same cat that we'd met the year before, and we named her Gracie. She was a wonderful cat who never stopped learning new things and grew to be incredibly loving.

Gracie had a tough life. She seemed to have been taken from her mother too young, and never learned how to communicate with other cats. She was FIV+ when we got her, and didn't really know how to be a housecat. But she was smart and determined, and kept surprising us with new things she'd figured out. The pandemic was a blessing for her - she really blossomed once she got used to me and Margaret being home basically all the time.

Last fall Gracie developed lymphoma in her spine, which was likely a complication from the FIV. We got her the best care, and got a couple more good months with her, but she eventually died last February, at home, and surrounded by love, at about the age of fourteen.

So, if you were at Hampshire around 2010 and happen to remember a silver cat named Virginia, Margaret and I wanted you to know that she disappeared from campus not because anything bad happened to her, but because she too graduated and ventured out into the world outside of Hampshire. She was cared for, loved, and pampered, and will be deeply missed.



Acknowledgments

By Ida Kao

Some day soon, perhaps in forty years, there will be no one alive who has ever known me. That's when I will be truly dead – when I exist in no one's memory... I wonder who that person will be for me. Whose death will make me truly dead?

–Irvin D. Yalom

I would like to thank...

My committee, Professors George Furlas and Lili Kim, and my special project supervisor, College Archivist Shaun Trujillo (Foo).

Other staff and faculty I have worked with closely over the years, including Herb Bernstein, Jacob Chartier, Stephanie Friedman, Ruth Goldman, Alana Kumbier, Suzanne Karanikas, Robin Nolasco, Matt Spring, and Laura Wenk.

The alums I have interviewed, including Tom Kizzia (F70), Peter Darrah (F86), Emily Drummer (FO9), Ben Kudler (FO9), and Koby Leff (F15). Subsequent interview subjects are italicized.

Alums who have supported me in my work:

Tim Shary (F86), for recognizing the importance of a student-driven history all the way back in 1990.

Scott Tundermann (F92), for helping start The Omen.

Jacob Chabot (F96), for drawing my graduation cap, and doing a whole bunch of free work for The Omen.

Josiah Erikson (F97), for being The Omen's biggest fan and a supportive community member.

Austin Rachlis (F99), for being a competent editor. (Even if it wasn't for The Omen!)

Zole (F99), for talking me out of a couple of really bad ideas, and giving me much needed perspective on The Omen, Hampshire, life, and the tomfoolery that comes with all three of them.

Josiah Litant (FOO), for being a pillar of the Hampshire community and who would have been a kickass Dean of Students.

Stephen Morton (FO4), for remembering so much of Omen history and being the technological wizard/archivist we need but don't deserve.

Nora Nalle (FO8), for being in charge of one of the few functioning parts of Community Council and still checking up on Hampshire over Instagram so many years later.

Tim Kovolenko (FO9), for talking me out of a couple of really bad ideas, giving me much needed perspective, and for being the older, wiser friend I needed.

Ethan Ludwin-Peery (FO9), for helping me revive Deathfest, backing me up when declaring that it's called SAGA, and for being the older, wiser friend I needed.

Fi Stewart-Taylor (F10), for only putting pictures of cats on Instagram.

Michelle Lifson (F11), for trying as hard as possible, and for giving me some much needed perspective on SOURCE.

Mitch Krieger (F11), for the undying enthusiasm about everything Hampshire, from its history to what could have been, but never came to be.

Xavier de Janon (F12), for speaking and writing the truth even though no one wanted to hear it.

Colby Colodner (F10), for talking to me and to Liz McGourty for our respective Div IIIs on Hampshire College.

Simon Fields (F14) and Chloe Omelchuck (F15), for sticking with The Omen and I until the end, and then some.

Current students and friends outside of Hampshire, including:

Kodiak Sanders (F18), for keeping me company during the lonely S21 semester.

Juliana Saxe (F18), for being one of my oldest friends.

Nicholas Utakis-Smith (F20), for sticking your neck out to care for The Omen and for Hampshire College.

Oshin Pandey (S21), for being a great F21 orientation co-leader, ally within the Hampshire College Student Union, and for continuing to care despite everything.

Casper Binnett (F21), for stepping up for The Omen when we really needed it.

Robert French (F21), for giving remarkably good advice for a dude who can't seem to catch a break.

Jess Jiménez (F21), for trying so hard, even when it feels like there's no point.

Rebecca Kim (F21), for handing out even when times were tense.

Peter Lampropoulos (F21), for being an awesome orientee, Omenite, Ingenuity Award nomination writer, and friend.

Echo Lustig (F21), for being my modmate and a keen observer of human nature.

Jay Poggi (F21) and Leo Zhang (F21), for ensuring I had a 100% success rate in picking successors for the editorship.

Ash Wiseth, for letting me know that Hampshire College existed.

And last but not least, everyone who has dedicated themselves to making The Omen and FiCom/FundCom continue over the years! It's been a wild ride.

May your work live on, and may you never truly be dead. 🐼

SECTION LIES

Nerd-Ass Dense-as-a-Brick Dark Crystal Fan-Fiction

By Grace Wiley F12

When Elder Onica was younger, when the world was in more dire need of saving, nightly she dreamt of fire. She dreamt of the multicolor flames that would unite the former Seven Clans and form the Wall of Destiny and dreamt of bright destructive fires that harkened the terrible Garthim Wars. Now after innumerable trine at sea, there is little to dream about.

Even without such important dreams, there is always need for a far dreamer at sea. Elder Onica is trusted by her shipmates and the occasional passing vessel to tell if a storm is coming and which course to take. She is asked by expecting parents to see the future of their children and by girls with freshly sprouted wings if a Gelfling of their fancy likes them, or to help her own Elders, some her own friends, to return their bodies to Thra. Beneath sails painted with the Auriel, life is nothing as their Gelfling ancestors could have ever imagined, and yet it goes on, ever flowing and constant as the water on the Silver Sea.

Elder Kylan, with his books gifted to him by Mother Aughra herself in exchange for his firca, far dreams in his own way. He finds passages in his stories of Gyr and Raunip which help the fleets navigate the sparse islands filled with fruit both good to eat and poisonous. Some islands are filled with dangerous beasts and some with fliers and crawlies so beautiful they put the brothers and sisters to shame with their shining wings. Elder Onica's once russet hair is fading into the silver of mountain snow and her eyebrows have grown in, and still there are wonders of Thra she has yet to see.

One night their ship runs across another ship of travelers and it is not long before a call is heard from the watch pole that third ship is headed their way. It is rare for one vessel to cross another, even across many unums, and it is rarer still for three to come together.

They make land on a desolate beach of sandy atoll and light a fire so that they may all sup on their rations and song tell and pour over one another's maps and charts. Some of the younger Gelfling are in reverence of the Elders who had a hand in the earliest beginnings, of the Resistance. There are songs of them now and Elder Kylan records each variation with fascinated interest, even the ones that tell parts of his own life wrong.

Each ship has their share of mates that have what would be considered the gift of far dreaming, though not all of them share the Sifan ways that Onica had been trained in. Some of them carry customs that come from the Swamps of Sog and even as far as the Crystal Sea. There is much to share.

One of them has been having dreams of the mainland and it cannot be denied by the way the brothers huddle together in the sky that something is coming and that soon it will be time to turn back.

The ships stay together on the atoll for a cycle and then all depart in separate directions to find other vessels, with the agreement to sail eastward once the Great Conjunction has occurred.

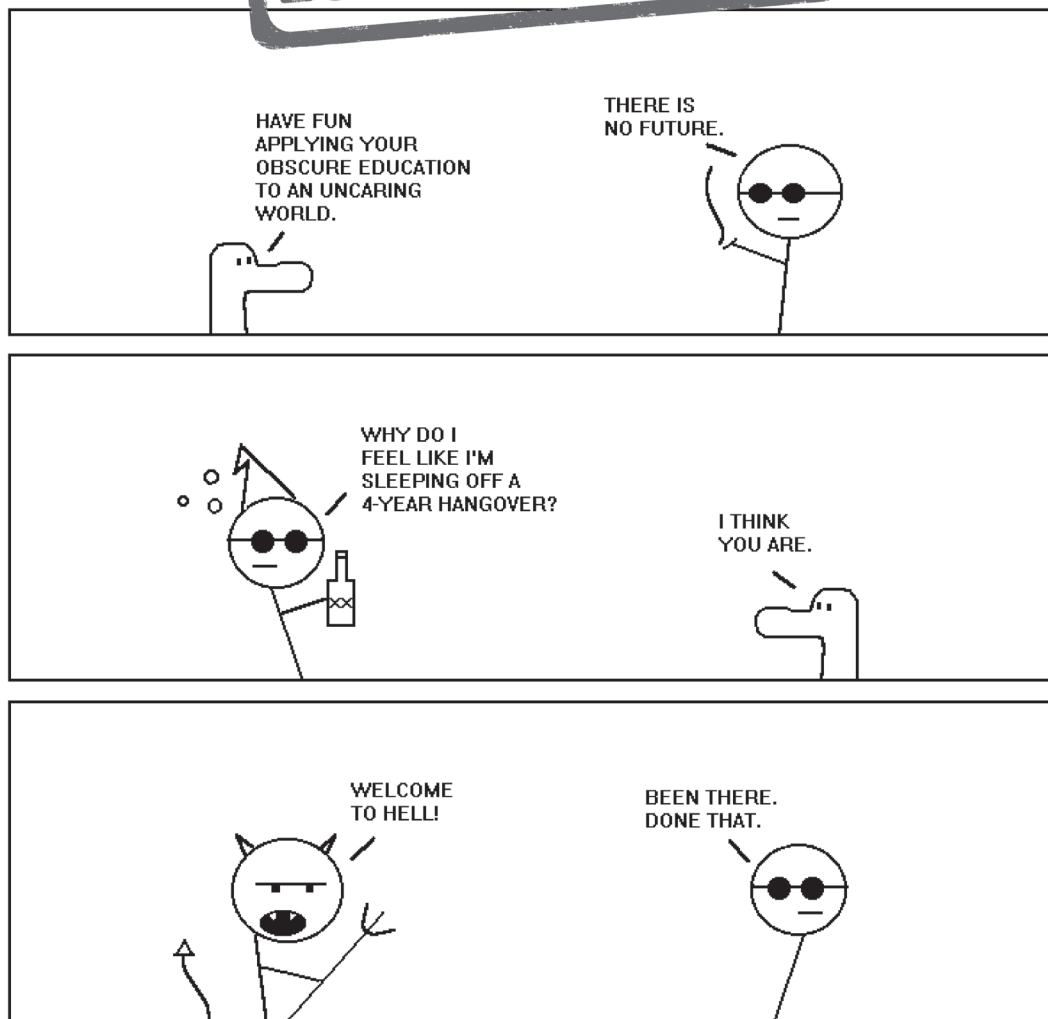
The brothers draw closer at each passing day and Elder Onica starts to have dreams again. They are no longer dreams of fire. There are dreams of a blinding light and of ferns uncurling themselves to the fierce midday light in a green and breathing forest. The dreams of ordinary things, of a clear running stream or of white snow on the beach, things she has not thought of in trine, are the dreams

By the day of the Conjunction other vessels have joined their ship so that there is something of a fleet and all the Gelfling stand on the decks to watch when the brothers join over the eastern horizon. Elder Onica climbs to the top of the watch pole and sees a beam of light in the distance that runs straight into the skies. The beam of light lasts for a few moments and before it disappears entirely and Elder Onica swears she can see eight shadows pass up through it. It flashes into the heavens like the tail of a shooting star and the sky seems to flash. Then the sky is a little bluer. The sea is a little clearer, a little less murky, and the air is a sweetness that she had forgotten possible.

The fleet continues its course to the mainland. 🐑

HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE COMMENCEMENT 2000

REJECTED



Section Hate

Fuck the Fucking Fuckers III: Electric Boogalee

The Threequel No One Asked For

By Ida Kao

This is the submission that I have been waiting to write since Spring 2021. I've been chomping at the bit since I scanned the original Fuck the Fucking Fuckers in Volume 14 Issue 8 by Jacob Chabot (F96). Well, actually, I was waiting to write Fuck the Fucking Fuckers II until I realized that Benni Pierce had written that one in Volume 18 Issue 7 (F98). I'm a former editor of The Omen, so writing this is practically my birthright. Sprinkle in the hell that was being a FundCom officer, and you've got the recipe for the infamous "bitter older student" that was a popular concept at Hampshire back in the late 90's and early aughts. (I'm not the first Omenite to help delegate the Student Activities Fund, either; Michelle Beach (F98) Chaired FiCom back when it was still called that.) This is my swan song, motherfuckers, so sit your sorry ass down and gear up for one last bitching. If you want something happier, look at my Acknowledgements, or read Jim Patten's thing. He's the saint this College needs but in no way deserves. Fire Ed and make him the President. Fire Zauyah and make Erdim Yilmaz the Dean of Students. This College would be a much better place if they were.

On some level, I knew that the cycle of horrifically broken systems of governance were the norm at Hampshire. The details of the conflict are different, of course, but the broad strokes are the same. Sitting in two meetings per week where all anyone did was talk instead of make actual plans and execute, watching the same points get hashed and rehashed since everything needs to be explained over and over until it's as rubbery as the croissant at The Kern Kafe that Juliana Saxe (F18) bit into, only to find a piece of plastic inside. (The plastic is a metaphor, or something.) At the same time, the rate at which everything fell apart, and the refusal to even make a structure, even if it would never be adhered to, is fairly unique to this particular cycle. Still, the end result is the same; the government is in tatters, FundCom is still standing but practically radioactive because everyone has seen the racism and mistreatment the officers have faced, and doesn't want to get thrown in the meat grinder like we have. If the FundCom strike does nothing to actually provide support for the FundCom officers, then the newest set of students will fall prey to the same problems, and there might not be any students with enough knowledge of this godforsaken place to try and disrupt it again.

We're all standing on the shoulders of giants here, and you would think that being such a tiny community would mitigate just how poor the institutional memory is. Instead, Hampshire College and the people that make it what it is continue to stumble forward blindly, slapdash throwing together a solution, not realizing that what they're trying to do has already happened here before, and no, it didn't work. (Why do you think this problem persists?) History rhymes and not many pay enough attention to notice. So instead we have me, quoting every which way from past Omens, because absolutely none of this is new or surprising, but everyone acts like it is when each crop of new students comes in, learns the same lessons the last one did, and leaves with a fresh set of traumas.

Of course, the Venn diagram illustrating the overlap between the organizations that have caused such a pain for FundCom, namely the Hampshire College Student Union (HCSU), The Portfolio, the

peer facilitators who led “anti-racism” workshops in Fall 2021 that had most of the BIPOC Div Is proclaiming it was racist, and SALS, the mind bogglingly long acronym for the Students Against the Land Sale and Institutionalization of Hampshire College (which is already an institution, mind you), is a couple of outliers away from being a circle. The BIPOC students being propped up as the leadership while all of the decisions are being made by white students is an open secret, at least amongst those who are actually paying attention. Those students know who I’m referring to, and the only reason I’m not naming names is out of respect for the current Omen signers. FUCK YOU HCSU, THE PORTFOLIO, PEER FACILITATORS, AND SALS (except Oshin, of course).

Oh, and let’s not forget the administrators who have enabled this bullshit to continue despite countless emails, meetings that stretch on for hours until it’s interrupted by forgetting to pick their child up or another meeting. Let’s not forget the one who called the Student Union corrupt and “not mature enough to lead with humility” behind closed doors unprompted but refused to intervene when asked to end the corruption, who claimed that senior leadership would “be crucified” and let the FundCom officers take all the heat instead. Let’s not forget that the very tippy top of the food chain here at Hampshire fundamentally misunderstood how FundCom operated, found out from the Director that the Student Union couldn’t get their stipends paid out of the SAF, and let the conflict he knew was coming happen anyway. Let’s not forget that all of this suffering and harassment was completely unnecessary, and a bunch of whiny white students who couldn’t understand that refusing to play favorites is different from being “unfairly targeted” and felt the best way to get it handled was passive aggressiveness and gossip got away with it because the actual adults in the room did nothing but shrug their shoulders and proclaim that there was nothing they could do. I’m still waiting for that public apology. Until then, FUCK YOU PRESIDENT EDWARD WINGENBACH AND DEAN OF STUDENTS ZAUYAH WAITE.

I think Stephen Morton (F04) put it best in the OG Commencement issue way back in Volume 34 Issue 8, that he has changed considerably, and “Some of this is because of Hampshire, some of it because of the Omen, and some of it had nothing to do with any of that.” The world seemed intent on making the F18 entering class at Hampshire miserable; first Spring 2019, then a precipitous decline in faculty, classes, money, and then being sent home and shut away in the dorms/mods when we were finally able to return thanks to COVID-19. In a certain sense, this last year here has been substantially better; The Omen’s had quite the resurgence, and I don’t think this campus will be forgetting me any time soon. Still, this past year or so has made me wonder if I should just reprint what Xavier de Janon (F12) wrote in 2016. The title “Advice: Stay Away from Hampshire Exploitation” probably tells you everything you need to know, although I encourage everyone reading this to read it in full anyway. Check out Volume 46, Issue 3, or see it reprinted in Volume 50 Issue 3.

The only silver lining is that, unlike Xavier, I didn’t graduate with all this work in vain. The Hampshire Student Union took a couple of years to circle the drain but it was as good as dead by the time he left. FundCom has, in all but name, been around for as long as the College and outlived every other governing structure on campus, and as much as The Portfolio trash talked The Omen and called me stupid during that Sunday night meeting in the fall, they can’t kill The Omen. No one can. I can’t, you can’t. You can only make it more bitter.

In Volume 18 Issue 7, Gwynne Watkins (F98) compared Hampshire to the prodigal son, the one who is revered and celebrated upon realizing his mistake and returning home to ask for forgiveness. “... my affection is permanent, no matter how many things try to displace it.” I think it’s more like Stockholm Syndrome. I can’t really explain why I didn’t have it in me to fill out that transfer application form to Mount Holyoke at any point during Spring 2019, or Fall 2019, or Spring 2020. I would have a lot more faith in this world and its ability to right wrongs if I had left. Maybe someday I’ll feel the way Gwynne does. For now, all I can say is FUCK YOU HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE. 🙄



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1:25 PM · Sep 15, 2008 · Twitter Web Client

Submitted by David Axel Kurtz F06 

if she's your girl
why is she
tearing me
apart??

By Annie Bartlo F13 

Best of wishes to you, Graduates!

Hi 2022 Grads, I just wanted to say that I'm honored and touched that I was a nominee as your Commencement Speaker. I have had the honor the past 2 years in a row to give the staff speech and had given my 1st staff speech in 2010. They are all up on YouTube so you can watch them there if you want to feel what I feel for our amazing students, yourself included! I know that there are other staff that need a chance to represent. Erdim will do a great job and has asked me for some guidance which I plan to help with. It truly has been awesome to get to know you and provide you with customer service and share a smile when you needed it (even if it's behind a mask). You all really are an amazing group of human beings. Seeing your work is just a part of what is so great about working at this place. The people we meet in our journey of life and the memories we share are treasures. You are all treasures to me, just so you know. I feel I had to say something to let you know that you will be missed around here. I wish you the best in whatever you do. Thank you for choosing Hampshire and making this place better by sharing your time and talents. I know you will help make our world a better place, you've already done that here.

Jim Patten (Hampshire College Post Office/HampStore) 🐼